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Ex-Parkway Bank official indicted

Chairman's son charged with fraud, income tax evasion

A former officer of Parkway Bank who also is the son of the chairman was charged Wednesday with fraud and federal income tax offenses for allegedly obtaining nearly \$500,000 from a customer's credit line and converting the money to his own use.

Jeffrey Suspenzi, 34, was charged with one count of bank fraud and two counts of filing false individual income tax returns in a three-count criminal information filed by U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald.

Suspenzi, of South Elgin and formerly of Palatine, was an assis-

tant vice president of the 19-branch Parkway Bank.

Suspenzi's father is Rocco Suspenzi, chairman of Parkway. Lawyers for the Illinois Gaming Board last year presented evidence showing that the father-son team wrote checks totaling \$125,000 to buy part of an interest in the Emerald Casino targeted for Rosemont from an Emerald investor whom state lawyers said had links to organized crime.

The seller was Joseph Salamone, described by state investigators as linked to the mob through a brother. Gaming Board lawyers also sought to tie the Suspenzi family to the village of Rosemont and its mayor, Donald E. Stephens, a beneficiary of large campaign contributions from the Suspenzi family. The Gaming Board cited wrongdoing by Emer-

ald in rejecting Rosemont's casino plan in 2001.

The village has since proposed using the casino site for a huge water park.

On Wednesday, Fitzgerald charged that between Dec. 11, 2000, and June 28, 2001, Jeffrey Suspenzi schemed to embezzle funds from a Parkway Bank customer identified as Individual A, whose accounts he supervised.

According to the information, on 18 occasions in 2000 and 2001 Suspenzi withdrew a total of \$497,717 from Individual A's line of credit, without Individual A's knowledge or permission.

The withdrawals were in the form of cashier's checks made payable to Individual A in varying amounts. Suspenzi signed his own name on each of the fraudulently issued cashier's checks as the au-

thorizing bank official, and then allegedly forged Individual A's signature on the back of the checks, endorsed them again with his own signature, and cashed them at Parkway Bank.

The tax counts allege that Suspenzi filed false federal income tax returns for two years, reporting total income in 2000 of \$261,922, and \$115,852 in 2001, when he knew that his total income was substantially greater in both years.

Suspenzi's attorney did not return a call seeking comment, and Suspenzi could not be reached.

If convicted, Suspenzi faces maximum penalties of 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine for bank fraud and 3 years and \$250,000 fine for filing false tax returns.

Contributing: Chris Fusco

Ex-bank exec accused of embezzling

By Rudolph Bush
Tribune staff reporter

Federal prosecutors charged a former assistant vice president of Parkway Bank of Harwood Heights on Wednesday with embezzling nearly \$500,000 from a client whose credit accounts he supervised.

Jeffrey Suspenzi, the son of Parkway Bank Chairman Rocco Suspenzi, also was charged with filing false income tax returns in 2000 and 2001.

His lawyer, Thomas Breen, could not be reached Wednesday for comment.

Suspenzi, 34, of South Elgin, persuaded a client to consolidate and increase a \$1 million line of credit at the bank to \$1.5 million, prosecutors said. Suspenzi told the client, who was not identified, that the extra credit was needed for business purposes when Suspenzi really wanted it for his personal use, prosecutors said.

On 18 occasions in 2000 and 2001, Suspenzi withdrew more than \$497,000 from his client's account, prosecutors said.

Those same years, he reported that he earned \$261,922 and \$115,852 respectively, when he knew he made substantially more money, prosecutors said.

Suspenzi allegedly authorized cashier's checks to be written on the client's account. Prosecutors said he concealed the scheme by paying interest on the withdrawals and preventing bank employees from sending statements to the client.

In an earlier case, Suspenzi and his father were accused by the Illinois Gaming Board of secretly splitting an investment in the Emerald Casino. Last year they declined to testify about the matter. According to evidence submitted by the Gaming Board, the Suspenzis were involved in a secret contract with brothers Vito and Joseph Salamone to divide the latter's \$375,000 share in the casino. A preliminary FBI report stated Vito Salamone had associated with organized-crime figures.

Tribune staff reporter John Chose contributed to this report.
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